

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

1. (Currently Amended) An intervertebral implant having a central axis substantially parallel to or coaxial with an axis of a spinal column, comprising:

an upper and a lower terminal part each fitted with an outermost surface configured transversely to the central axis, said upper terminal part having a first curved inner surface and said lower terminal part having a second curved inner surface, said first and second curved surfaces being opposite one another; and

a joint element configured between the terminal parts and resting in a sliding manner against the curved inner surfaces of the upper and lower terminal parts, the joint element including first and second external convex slide surfaces, the first slide surface contacting the first curved inner surface of the upper terminal part, the second slide surface contacting the second curved inner surface of the lower terminal part, the first curved ~~concave~~ inner surface and the first slide surface forming a first joint rotatable about a first axis of rotation, the first axis of rotation being perpendicular to the central axis when in an initial position, the second curved inner surface and the second slide surface forming a second joint rotatable about a second axis of rotation, the second axis of rotation intersecting the central axis at an acute angle α , the second axis of rotation being spaced apart from the first axis of rotation by a distance A as measured along the central axis, wherein $0 < \text{distance A} < 18 \text{ mm}$.

2. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral implant as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first axis of rotation and the second axis of rotation cross each other.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The intervertebral implant as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first curved inner surface has a first radius of curvature and the first external convex slide surface has a second radius of curvature, the first radius of curvature being not equal to ~~different than~~ the second radius of curvature ~~and whereby the external convex slide surface of the joint element and the first curved inner surface contact one another via line contact.~~

5. (Currently Amended) The intervertebral implant as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of the slide surfaces has a first radius of curvature and at least one of the curved inner surfaces of the terminal parts has a second radius of curvature, the first radius of curvature being not equal to ~~different than~~ the second radius of curvature ~~whereby the convex joint element and at least one of the curved inner surfaces contact one another via line contact.~~

6. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral implant as claimed in claim 1, wherein the first slide surface of the joint element is complementary to the first curved inner surface.

7. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral implant as claimed in claim 1, wherein the second slide surface of the joint element is complementary to the second curved inner surface.

8. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral implant as claimed in claim 1, wherein the angle α is between 60 and 88 degrees.

9-12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral implant as claimed in claim 1, wherein the outermost surfaces exhibit a three-dimensional structure.

14. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral implant as claimed in claim 1, wherein the outermost surfaces are titanium grids that can be connected to the terminal parts.

15. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral implant as claimed in claim 1, wherein:

at least one of the terminal parts comprises a first rotation-restricting stop shortening a front side of the intervertebral implant parallel to the central axis about the first axis of rotation at an angle of rotation γ between 5 and 15 degrees; and

at least one of the terminal parts includes a second rotation-restricting stop shortening a rear side of the intervertebral implant parallel to the central axis about the first axis of rotation at an angle of rotation β between 2 and 15 degrees.

16. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral implant as claimed in claim 15, further comprising a third rotation-restricting stop restricting the rotation about the second axis of rotation at a maximum angle of rotation δ between -.5 degrees and +10 degrees.

17. (Previously Presented) The intervertebral implant as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least one of the terminal parts is a three-element part and comprises an outermost cover plate, a joint pan enclosing the curved inner surface and in-between an elastically deforming spacer.